

Mailing WIC Food Instruments**Policy No. FD-940.01**

Effective Date: October 1, 2016

No. of Pages: 4

Policy

Mailing of food instruments (FIs) to participants within a valid certification period shall be permitted by a local agency (LA) under extenuating circumstances when the nutrition education requirement is met. LAs must document the reason for mailing FIs.

A maximum of two (2) months of FIs can be issued and mailed at a time. The LA may mail a maximum of two additional months of vouchers after verifying receipt and redemption of previously mailed vouchers when participant education requirements are met. Nutrition education (high and low risk) contacts can be completed by phone or online before mailing vouchers. Reference Policy No. [NS-200.03 Participant Nutrition Education](#) and Policy No. [NS-200.11 Nutrition Education Phone Contact](#).

FIs cannot be mailed with the WIC Identification Folder (WIF). Printed FIs must be mailed within one business day of printing. FIs must be secured at all times during transportation to the post office or placed directly in the letter carrier's hand if not transported. FIs must not be placed in the clinic's mail tray for pick up.

Staff must verify the participant's address before FIs can be mailed. Staff must be designated to complete the Mailed Voucher Activity report daily. The report must be maintained with printed FI receipts by the report's date. The Redemption Report must be printed monthly and maintained with the daily Mailed Voucher Activity Report.

To ensure program integrity and maintain separation of duties, staff designated to complete the report must record the initials of whomever verified the address, and the initials of who mailed the vouchers on the report.

Purpose

To permit eligible individuals to participate in WIC, who would otherwise be unable to participate in the program, while maintaining program integrity and accountability standards.

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Procedures

- I. Local agencies that elect to mail FIs will follow the below procedures:
 - A. Establish a system that ensures FIs are returned to the local agency if mail is deemed undeliverable.
 - B. Contact the participant to confirm the need for mailing the FIs and verify his/her mailing address.
 - C. Designate one staff person to print the vouchers.
 - D. Initial or sign the WIC FI Signature Line on the receipt and write "mailed".
 - E. Label envelopes with participant's address and ensure "Return Service Requested" is on the envelope.
 - F. Ensure the "return to sender" name on the mailing envelope is the local agency clinic address.
 - G. Ensure printed vouchers are securely stored until mailed.
 - H. Select the reason for mailing in the front-end system (FES).
 - I. Have a supervisor or designated staff verify that the printed FIs are placed in the correct envelopes and that the participant's name on the envelope matches the participant name on the FIs.
 - J. Seal the envelopes and verify the number of prepared envelopes with the number of participants listed on the Mailed Voucher Activity Report and sign the report on the bottom right corner.
 - K. Utilize a post office box or a district office return address label for all mailed FIs.
 - L. Transport FIs to the post office in a locked briefcase, lockbox, locked bag, etc.
- II. Mail FIs under the following circumstances:
 - A. Closure of a clinic due to structural damage, relocation, system failure, etc.
 - B. Participant or his/her parent/guardian/caretaker has a health-related illnesses that requires bed rest or that makes it difficult for them to come the clinic, and there is no alternate-proxy or proxy available to pick up FIs at the clinic.
 - C. Participant or his/her parent/guardian/caretaker has a physical disability or special health care needs that limit the ability to come into the clinic.
 - D. Environmental crisis as a result of a natural disaster or pandemic (e.g. tornado, ice storm, hurricane, flood, coronavirus, influenza, quarantine, communicable diseases, immune disorder, etc.).
 - E. Participant unable to keep appointment which would result in missing an entire month's FIs.
 - F. Participant's lack of transportation is deemed a barrier.
 - G. Other special circumstances approved by the Nutrition Services Director.

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- III. Complete and maintain the Mailed Voucher Activity Report and Redemption Report using the below procedures:
- A. Print the Mailed Voucher Activity Report from the front-end system (FES) daily.
 - B. Record the initials of the staff who mailed the FIs, the staff who verified the participant's address, and the date vouchers were physically mailed (not printed).
 - C. Maintain the report with the voucher receipts printed for the date of the report.
 - D. Run a copy of the Mailed Voucher Redemption Report from the VMARS dashboard approximately 30 days after the voucher print date (to allow time for the vouchers to be used).
 - E. Attach the electronic Mailed Voucher Redemption Report to the Mailed Voucher Activity Report for the same date.
 - F. Maintain both electronic copies at the clinic and submit both reports to the district office monthly.
- IV. Complete the following procedures when the participant/parent, guardian, caretaker reports FIs was not delivered:
- A. Access the participant's information in GWIS.net to determine whether the mailed FIs have been redeemed or run the Mailed Voucher Redemption Report.
 - B. If the FIs have not been redeemed and less than seven (7) working days have passed since the FIs were mailed, inform the participant that there will be a seven (7) working day waiting period before the FIs can be replaced to allow sufficient delivery time.
 - C. If the FIs have not been redeemed and more than seven (7) working days have passed:
 - 1. Advise the participant that receiving and redeeming two sets of food instruments for the same month is a violation of his/her Rights and Responsibilities and may result in disqualification and/or a claim assessment for the value of the redeemed vouchers from the program
 - 2. Record vouchers on the [Lost/Stolen/Destroyed Voucher Report](#) and replace the food instruments and follow lost/stolen/destroyed voucher procedures, reference [FD-920.01 Lost, Stolen, Damaged Vouchers](#).
 - 3. Inform the participant that if the first food instruments arrive in the mail, they must be returned to the local agency because they are invalid and cannot be cashed.
 - 4. Advise the State Agency's Program Operations Unit via e-mail that the mailed food instruments were not received and have been flagged by DXC when submitting the Lost/ Stolen/Destroyed Voucher Report.

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- D. If the FIs have been redeemed within seven (7) working days, then:
 - 1. Advise the participant that the FIs have been cashed and cannot be reissued prior to an investigation
 - 2. Report the incident to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) on the [Request for Investigation Form](#).

Authority

7 C.F.R. 246 § 246.7(f)(2)(iv)

7 C.F.R. 246 § 246.12(r)(4)

Definitions/Supporting Information

Food Instruments (FI)- means a voucher, check, electronic benefits transfer card (EBT), coupon or other document which is used by a participant to obtain supplemental foods.